

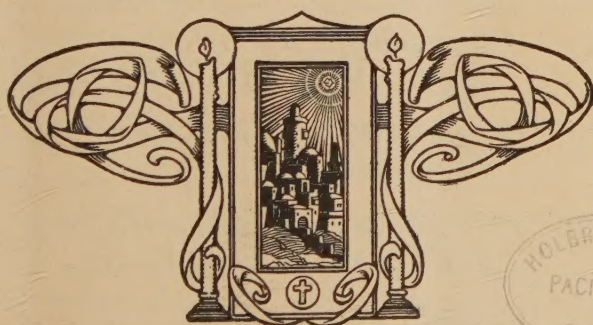
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The Preacher as Artist

The Rev. Dean Willard L. Sperry

The Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts

WE have been suffering in the American pulpit from what I have elsewhere called "the cult of unconventionality." This cult is not confined to the pulpit, but the pulpit has escaped it. There is warrant for it. The sermons of the nineteenth century, we reread them, were too stylized, too id, and in particular rather too elegantly rhetorical. In order to avoid these tight jackets and extraneous decorations the modern preacher has tended to the other extreme, to discard all the traditional usages and tackle his job from a different angle altogether. As one of the brisk contemporaries puts it, he "just ends up in the pulpit and talks straight to the folks." So I remember Canon Streeter coming to the Harvard Chapel a few years ago, and telling me before he went to the service that he had given up the attempt to preach a sermon in the formal sense of the word; he merely talked informally to a congregation about what happened to be uppermost in his mind. Streeter was an infinitely suggestive person, but he was a desultory speaker, sometimes fumbling in the pulpit over long sheets of the galley proofs, leaving his next book to spot a reference which he wished to use. He must have found this method unsatisfactory, for when he came back to us again, five years later, he preached a regular sermon, with text and a framework. The difficulty with this cult of unconventionality is that it gives the lie to itself, fashioning sooner, rather than later, its own new conventions. Unconventionality of this sort is a kind of brief, soft-

shelled period when a new shell is rapidly developing after an old shell has been discarded. So, the cheery modernist has given up saying, "Good morning, all," when he comes down to breakfast, and now says, "Hello, folks." The question then arises whether the new convention is, for regular use, better than the old. The apologist for unconventionality is ultimately faced with the fact that the permutations and combinations of unconventional usages in a constantly repeated act are limited and must end in the choice of some fresh convention in place of that which has been discarded. Thus, I remember hearing of one of these modernists, who had a slight impediment in his speech, which gave an appealing quality to his informal sermons. Instead of trying to cure this defect he deliberately encouraged it in himself, confiding to a friend that he found it won him the sympathy of his congregation! He made of what was at first a lack of vocal conventionality a new convention of his own.

I

There are very few preachers now left who make any profession of being homiletical "artists." Their avoidance of our traditional art is to this extent warranted. The art of the sermon in earlier times misinterpreted what the idea of any and all arts implies. Its art was, to much too great an extent, a matter of extraneous decoration. Purple, rhetorical passages were used to elaborate essentially simple themes; they were like Gothic ornaments stuck on a steel and concrete

structure, or like furbelows and ribbons and artificial flowers sewed on a plain dress.

In this respect modern architecture, whether one likes it or not, tries to be sincere. It works with its own media and is "functional." It does not depend on adventitious stuff for its appeal and effect. We may like it or not, but it is more honest than many of the buildings put up a half century ago. There is, in all our contemporary mores, a wholesome revolt against everything that is "arty and crafty" and thus against the now outmoded forms of old-time sermons.

But the difficulty with the deliberately artless sermon arises from the fact that the sermon is part of a total transaction which is not uniformly unconventional. There is, or ought to be, a contrast in mood and manner between the prior order of worship and the sermon. However low church and non-liturgical we may be, the items in an act of worship are more or less standardized. Only in the authentic Quaker meeting are the proceedings not merely unconventional but unpredictable. The meeting goes by the guidance of the Spirit, "which bloweth where it listeth."

Phillips Brooks used to signalize the distinction between the order of worship and the sermon by leaving the chancel of Trinity Church after the prayer of St. Chrysostom and the Benediction, and going into the vestry to exchange his white surplice for the preacher's black Geneva gown. The two transactions are different in kind. The more formal the liturgy and semi-liturgy, the more informal, or perhaps the more intimate and personal, the sermon may be in contrast to the impersonality of a good order of worship. It is wholly beside the mark for a minister to preface a Scripture lesson by saying, "*I have chosen as our lesson for the morning the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel.*" So it was said of another minister that he always led the Lord's Prayer "as though it were an

original composition then delivered for the first time!"

The basic principle of all arts is the acceptance of the initial necessity of pattern. There is no such thing as unpatterned art. The artist imposes upon himself certain chalk lines, as it were, within which he will do his work. The game of lacrosse was invented by the Indians of the Northwest. They had no chalk lines. If a player got the ball in his crosse he could run with it, if he so chose, from Minnesota to California. It was not a good game; tennis at Forest Hills is a much better game.

The more restricted the artist's self-imposed pattern, the more difficult his technical task. What Wordsworth called "the sonnet's scanty plot of ground" is a case in point; its number of lines, its meter and its rhymes, are all provided in advance. But when the result is Wordsworth's sonnet on Westminster Bridge or Milton's sonnet on his blindness, one can see how art deals with the products of life. One might go on to hazard the guess that all the loveliest things one knows in the field of art are done within some pattern deliberately accepted and worked out within the chalk lines. It is here that we are warranted in finding something inadequate and unsatisfying in the so-called "non-representative art" of the ultramodern subjective painter. His own thoughts and emotions being still unpatterned he does not succeed in conveying to us his ideas and feelings. So with the informal, casual sermon.

II

Hence I doubt our ability, as preachers, to gear an unconventional and unpatterned sermon into a total act which otherwise is patterned. To this extent the whole service should be in its style and felt "unity." The preacher should not be like a restless colt, irked by the fence which bound his pasture, and intent on jumping those fences and running loose on his own account. We ought to accept the

ct that the whole service of worship
of necessity, a patterned act, of which
a sermon is a part.

The cult of intimacy, informality, un-
conventionality may be right in trying to
break away from the too rigid patterns
of the past. Many a stock sermon was
built up within the familiar pattern: In-
troduction; Theme; Points I, II, III;
Conclusion and Exhortation. Most of us
think of more than one famous
preacher who used this pattern and this
is the only. We are not to be blamed if
we refuse to stay inside this single rigid
framework.

But our revolt does not do away with
the fact that there are other patterns
which may be used, and certain themes
which cannot be handled within the old
"I-II-III" framework. For instance,
there are some themes and texts which
are more or less self-evident. They defy
development, they can have no real his-
tory in the preacher's mind or the minds
of his hearers. Preparing such a sermon
is like putting up a flagpole. A hole
must be dug in the minds of the people
as a skillful bid for their attention. The
heart of the idea is then put into that
position and the theme held precariously
in position while the base of the pole is
filled in with illustrative material like stones
and concrete, to confirm it.

Or again, one might use the pattern
of the analogy—as in the parables of
Jesus. An "earthly truth" is developed
on one level and then the whole idea lifted
to a "heavenly" level and restated in its
ritual meanings. One comes across
this pattern rather constantly in Liddon
and Robertson and Maurice. Once again,
the question and answer pattern is today
a very effective one—the thesis, antithesis
and synthesis. There is only one proviso
to this connection, the initial question
must be honestly and fairly stated. It
must not be a rhetorical question which
the preacher puts up to show his skill in
knocking it over, like the visitor at a
fair shying cocoanuts at a dummy.
Thus, if one is addressing the classic

"atheist and agnostic," he ought to feel
that, if Thomas Huxley were sitting in
the pews, he would say that the preacher
had stated his case honestly. The Hux-
leys of this world are entitled to an in-
tellectual fair deal from the pulpit.

III

So, a sermon may be built on what
we might call the "skating" pattern; a
succession of brief, ongoing questions
and answers, each getting its thrust from
the previous stroke. Such a sermon moves,
it really gets ahead. Newman followed
this pattern rather constantly. One must
suppose that he got it from the move-
ment of the Platonic dialogues, so that
it had become a fixed habit of his mind.

A friend once described to me the pat-
tern used by the late Dr. Samuel Croth-
ers. Crothers was a superb and sur-
prising literary genius. His sermons, the
friend said, went soaring into the air like
a skyrocket, in a shifting, dazzling course.
At the last the whole meaning of the
sermon was unfolded in the shower of
brilliant sparks which end the flight of
a rocket. Crothers could do this; not all
of us would dare try it. The proposed
shower of bright ideas might prove a
dud at the last.

The technical problem for the mod-
ern preacher is not to try to exhaust the
resources of the cult of unconvention-
ality, since he will find that they exhaust
themselves only too soon. Whether he
will or no, he is bound to be an artist
of sorts, for better or for worse, since
he has to use some skeleton or frame of
reference for the handling of his ma-
terial. What he ought to do is build up
for his own use various patterns—other
than the "I, II, III"—within which his
subject may be treated. He can vary his
patterns according to the types of his
subjects. Not all subjects will fit any
one pattern.

In short, it is worth while studying
various preachers to see what patterns
they have used, and then feel free to go

on and fashion fresh patterns for one's self. The forms of the particular patterns may vary, and thus a preaching style will be delivered from a too familiar

monotony. But one cannot ultimately escape from the principle of patterns. How many useful and reliable patterns have you found or thought up for yourself?

Summer Preaching in Canada

The Rev. John R. Scotford

Mount Vernon, New York

IT started with an item in *Church Management* about Nova Scotia back in 1937. We did not get the job offered, but the minister passed on his surplus letters to his friends and we got another one. That started something. We have had five "preaching vacations" in Canada, and we have sent up two other men, one of whom has become a repeater. The only complaint has been from the parson with a pregnant wife craving fresh vegetables who landed on an island in Lake Huron where there weren't any! But he had a good time, if she didn't.

Each of our five assignments has been distinctly different. Imperoyal, across the bay from Halifax, was a marvellous point of departure for all sorts of trips. Beaverton, on Lake Simcoe, a hundred miles north of Toronto, was a substantial resort town. Gananoque, in the Thousand Islands, was a tourist center. Haileybury, a hundred miles north of North Bay, and the Quints, was our farthest north, with an attractive manse overlooking Lake Temiskaming. Espanola was a mill town buried in the lake-strewn forest 150 miles east of Sault Ste. Marie. Working out from these centers we have covered inhabited Canada from the Soo to Sidney, Nova Scotia's easternmost port.

The basic agreement in each instance has been that we got the use of a furnished house in return for doing the preaching. In three instances small sums of money have also changed hands, but these have been more an expression of

appreciation than a payment for service rendered. The amount of preaching has varied from one service a Sunday (once) to three-a-day, with four churches to run around among. Most Canadian churches have an out point of some sort.

Financially, we have done well. These Canadian trips have never cost as much as a real vacation would have in the States, and this last year we were better off than if we had stayed at home, despite some gas that cost 44 cents Canadian money for an Imperial (oversize) gallon. Translated into our money and measure, this comes out at about 30 cents an American gallon. During four weeks we exchanged \$110 American money for Canadian. This covered the living expenses of two people plus travel from Montreal to Sault Ste. Marie, some company, and one trip around Manitoulin Island. To have stayed in New York would have cost more. Yet most items are higher in Canada than in the United States. The chief bargains are milk, berries, and fish. Life, however, is much simpler than with us. There isn't much for which you want to spend your money.

Canada really needs summertime preachers. With an area greater than our 48 states it has a population about equal to the State of New York. Her people are scattered from several hundred miles east of easternmost Maine to the Pacific and from Detroit to the North Pole. This sparse population renders all sorts of public services difficult and

pensive and creates problems for the church. During the summer the attempt is made to provide religious services for non-French Canada. In addition, Canadian ministers like to go to summer school both there and in the States. A further factor is that the United Church runs a training school for its lay teachers, which takes some men from their fields in the summer. The result is that there are more pulpits than there are preachers to fill them. We have always gone to comfortable places, but we suspect that the United Church could make good use of anybody who was disused to rough it.

Preaching in Canada is much more of a bare-handed process than in the States. Architecture helps not at all. Music is more or less accidental embellishment in the service depending usually on what visitors may be in town. Services are simpler than here. You go ahead and preach, with the minimum of external helps. Afternoon and evening services are likely to be in schoolhouses, with from a dozen to twenty people in the congregation. This is hard work.

The Canadians are not crowding into their churches. Despite a tradition to the contrary, church attendance is no better than with us, and probably not as good. In 1945, with the atomic bomb bursting and the war folding up, our congregation increased every Sunday, but that year there were ten fewer people in church each Sunday than the week before. This process was brought to a climax by a thunderstorm which might have wiped out the congregation completely, only it didn't. Factors in the situation are the shortness of the summer (they don't bother to take off their storm windows) and the scarcity of automobiles. People get to church on their feet, and distances may be considerable.

We have a great respect for the people of Canada and a sincere liking for them. However, the ministerial visitor should not expect too much in the way of social attention. The people are strongly Scotch

and naturally reticent. They also have exaggerated notions of the affluence of all Americans. There are many ways in which our government and our people have been thoughtless of Canadian interests. The wise American will not say too much about life in the U. S. On the other hand, nearly everybody has a son, a brother, a nephew or an enterprising female relative south of the border. Canadian girls seem to shine as American nurses. In general, Canadians have the reserve of our New Englanders rather than the ready affability found in our West and South. They look you over before they commit themselves.

Spending a month in Canada can be a rewarding experience. There is lots to see, and the roads get better every year. Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec are fascinating cities, with Ottawa altogether too little known or appreciated. Canada has lakes without number. For fishermen she is rather close to heaven. (We haven't proved this, but are taking the word of friends.) In most of Eastern Canada the land and the water are all mixed up with more scenery than there are people to enjoy it.

Adjusting one's self to a new social setting is interesting and rewarding. In Canada the unique fact from our point of view is the presence of the French and the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church in much of the Dominion. The French Canadians are a likeable people. Their homes are either very, very clean or very dirty. They know more about cooking than do the British. Their inns are a delight. Yet they manage to live amongst and with the English with the minimum of real mixing. The French have no truck with the royal family or the Union Jack. The root of this separateness lies in the Catholic Church and in the separate system of schools which it dominates but which are paid for out of tax funds. The result is a bifurcated nation.

Our first summer in Canada we borrowed a couple of school histories—and

learned much. So long as Britain handled Canada's foreign relations she appears to have considered the goodwill of the United States more valuable to her than the immediate interests of Canada—and the result is a boundary line which makes it more convenient to go into the United States to get from one part of Canada to another than to stay north of the border. Canada's unity and independence has been achieved in the face of great difficulties, and is treasured accordingly. The stronger Canada becomes, the happier will be her relations with the United States.

Our preaching in Canada has been wholly within the United Church. Few Americans realize how truly this is The Church of Canada. To equal the membership of the United Church it would be necessary to combine the next three denominations in size: the Presbyterians, the Anglicans, and the Baptists. Further, most of the religiously unaffiliated look to the United Church. In the last census some half million more people reported "adherence" to the United Church than that church had added up under the heading "souls under pastoral care." As one minister put it, "The man on the street who never will go to church always says that if he did go to church it would be the United Church." This shows in the records of marriages performed. In spite of being a foreigner, we have twice had a hard time getting out of marrying couples. The populace seems to believe that anybody who preaches in a United Church is competent to conduct weddings. And the United Church is really united! We have preached in both former Methodist and former Presbyterian churches, but we had to ask to discover their original affiliation. The grand fact is that the United Church accepts responsibility for providing a religious ministry in the far and distant places of a thinly populated land.

Life in Canada is austere. The government puts on no airs. Post offices and schools—and churches—operate in

unassuming if not antiquated buildings. People live much more simply than south of the border. Frugality is both a necessity and a virtue.

For a linguist, Canada has five variants on our usage. A psalm is likely to be a *sam*. The ice box is the *fridge*. A lieutenant may be a *leftenant*. One's vacation is described as "your holidays." A schedule is apt to be a *shedule* but a school is still a school.

One mystery we have never been able to fathom is why the hymnody of the two countries is so different. We let the people pick their own hymns, and they will usually come up with about one a Sunday which we have ever heard before.

To one going to Canada to preach, or for other purposes, we have some helpful hints to offer.

It is well to find out before you leave home what household appliances will be available for you in your temporary abode. A Canadian home has the same electrical equipment, plus an electric stove, as is commonly found in this country, only the dominie's wife may take some of it with her when the family goes to a summer cottage or to school.

Canada is a land of a very few big banks with multitudinous branches of which each town will have just one. The correct procedure is to call on the manager of the local branch the morning after you arrive, as he is the man who will okay any check you may want to cash. The charge for cashing in Canadian currency is 28 cents per check, regardless of the amount; if you want U. S. currency it is a bit more.

If you carry any Canadian money into the U. S. it will be discounted at least twenty per cent, besides being a nuisance. In going into Canada it is well to accumulate a good supply of one dollar bills, which can be changed as needed without accumulating Canadian currency. The trick is to come out even when you leave the country so far as Canadian money is concerned. If I find that I have just 85 cents left when I am ready to cross the

order, I go to the gas station and buy
at 85 cents of gasoline.

The preaching arrangement which I
have described is entirely legal, but if
they ask what you are going to Canada
or when you enter the country you can
trouble everybody by telling them
that you are going fishing or are on a
vacation. This is particularly true if you
meet a green immigration officer. In re-

cent years Canada has been so anxious
to get hold of the dollars in the pockets
of American tourists that they have al-
most quit asking questions at the border.
What they are really interested in is
their parting query, "How much money
did you spend in Canada?" which is put
to you just before you are turned over
to the United States immigration and
custom officials, on the way out.

The Minister and Controversial Subjects

The Rev. George Tolover Tolson

Berkeley, California

IN a democracy issues become con-
troversial because they are consid-
ered socially or morally important
and because in the last analysis they are
the responsibility of the people. The
World Council of Churches decided that
the Church is not meeting fully the duty
of considering such matters in the light
of Christian truth and in the atmosphere
of the church. The lag in these respon-
sibilities is due in part to the observed
controversies that the churches and the
ministers themselves experience when
undertaking this task. These distur-
bances are due in larger measure to the
faulty methods employed.

Some conscientious preachers feel
strongly that, like the Apostle Paul, they
must "in season and out of season" "de-
clare the whole counsel of God." They
make shipwreck of their pastorate and
maybe of their ministry by not taking
time and circumstance into consideration.
More of us neglect this obligation be-
cause we fear to hinder rather than help.
This might well be true when on the sub-
ject people are thinking more with their
emotions than with their minds.

Although Jesus did not live under a
democracy but among a people who had
very limited public responsibility we still

may learn much from his example. When
John the Baptizer was arrested Jesus
withdrew from Judea into Galilee. When
John was beheaded Jesus withdrew with
his disciples into a desert place apart.
He took care not to get into the toils
of Roman law. He advised paying the
very unjust taxes which went largely to
support tyranny, imperialism, graft and
luxury. He even suggested obedience to
the Roman draft law requiring a civilian
to carry a soldier's equipment a mile upon
the soldier's request. He even asked
silence regarding his messiahship on the
part of his disciples lest the Jews mis-
understand the meaning of his mission
and the Romans accuse him of establish-
ing a rival kingdom. When before Pilate
he was silent on some subjects. He
exhorted his disciples not to cast their
pearls before swine. Indeed, there are
times to keep silence. But there are times
to speak, too. We ministers are some-
times suspected of playing it a little
too safe and ever working the silent
times. This criticism is unjust. There
would be less silent times if the minister
were more resourceful in the matter of
methods. Controversial matters should
very rarely be brought into the morning
service. Beyond doubt much more reli-

gious instruction should be featured in that service, in an atmosphere of worship. Nothing should be done to thwart the main purpose of bringing the people into intimate consciousness of the reality of God's presence. This worship, it is, that gives flavor, direction and inspiration to daily life.

Under ordinary circumstances rarely does a Congregational minister need to be pedagogical, but in our urgent times we need to remind ourselves to begin where the people are, at A B C, and proceed through L M N to X Y Z, where we believe the people ought to be in their thinking. Even in our time of swift changes in thought and circumstances the slow pedagogical method leads on much more surely and probably about as quickly to the desired end.

In the clarification, enlargement and restatement of fundamental Christian truth the minister of necessity will have to bear the chief burden and that he must not neglect. To aid the thinking of the people and secure their cooperation regarding the use of Christian ideals and principles in the solution of social problems old and new, the minister in most instances can use to better advantage forward-looking and respected laymen. This may be done through a Social Action Committee but preferably by some less suspected name such as, for example, Religion in Life Committee or Committee on Religion and Public Affairs. This committee may report occasionally by means of an insert in the church calendar or an article in the parish bulletin if there is one. When initiative, referendum, taxation measures, etc., are on the ballot at a public election, the committee may render a great service by an-

nouncing or publishing a summary of the recommendations of committees, societies, clubs or other organizations of repute. Cautiously the voting records of legislators who are up for re-election may be given, but always without comment.

In times when the public is much disturbed and sides are taken, the Social Action Committee can do a noteworthy service by arranging forums at which all sides of the matter are to be presented. A full schedule should be announced in advance. One side of the controversy should be presented at a meeting by some person agreeable to those concerned. No remarks should be permitted from the floor nor any insinuating questions should be allowed. No vote should be taken during or after the close of the series. This method was followed with much success in a church in which a short time before there was a riot with arrests when, as had been announced, at a Sunday evening service a guest minister who was known to be rather radical was presenting the viewpoint of the laborers in a serious longshoreman's strike.

And now the reason for this article. By the employment of appropriate methods the minister and the church will become more ready and able to fulfill their mission. The minister will be able to modernize and vitalize the thinking of the people about doctrinal and social matters. The church will be more ready to gather and disseminate needed information about important controversies and offer constructive criticism in the light of Christian truth, and thus forward the Kingdom of God and convince the world that the church is interested in this world as well as in the next.

Stepping Westward

The Rev. Percy C. Ladd

New York, N. Y.

WHEN you have preached your final sermon in your last pastorate, and your friends have said their sincere good-byes at the farewell reception, what then? Is it to be the end of the journey or just a turn of the road? The question faces every minister.

There is no stated answer. What a minister will do after he retires depends on many things. What are his resources and means? What does he like to do? What is he fitted to do? What does he have physical strength to do? What is open to him to do? What will his children help him to do? What openings are there for him?

I can only tell you what some of our "family" of pensioners are doing. Of course many of them are long past the time when they have the strength to carry any load at all of labor. It is their privilege to illustrate how a Christian can meet the levies which old age lays upon the mind and the soul. I will simply open to you the experience of some of the men who are now where we all will be in time.

I

Their first and most natural hope is that they may find something to do for the churches. This is along the line of their experience, their aptitudes and their taste. Quite often they are fortunate in finding such a place. They rejoice to find it, for, as we can readily imagine, when a man has preached for many years he has a head of spiritual steam which presses to have vent. Silence is

a cross to him. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Many preach in small churches nearby where the pastoral load is light. Others supply the interim between pastorates; others are a ready recourse of the State Superintendent for casual calls. The service is paid in part; in part it is voluntary; always it is welcome. Some of our retired men are regular pastors of small churches which value their wisdom and spirit. Many lead Bible classes. The women on the Roll, several of them, give valuable service as teachers and superintendents in the Church schools, leaders in women's organizations and speakers for a variety of occasions. Many a letter has come to my desk breathing the power of the evangelistic urge and the summons to Christian action. One, from a man who preached, wrote and broadcast until he was seventy-nine, said: "As I look at the world today, how I wish I were thirty years younger, so I could go to Japan, India, China. Now all I can do is to try to make Kentucky a better state!"

Then, too, since our life as ministers tends to engage the mind, many of our retired ministers continue that kind of work in some capacity outside the pulpit. It is natural for us to write; some turn to writing as a vocation, or at least an avocation. One man assumes the role of historian for his Conference or church; another becomes a columnist for the local paper on religious or current themes; a third relieves his soul in many letters "to the editor." One of our aged men of the gospel has turned to the law, and befriends many a wan-

dering soul in making out his income-tax blank. They are made use of, frequently, as secretaries of cemetery associations, since they are well acquainted with those in grief. Since they also serve who only stand and wait, the contribution made to society by these men of quiet culture and balanced judgment can hardly be reckoned.

But not all labor is of the mind, some of it is of the hand and the mind together, and for that, in these days, there is ample scope. Of honorable laborers in both skilled and unskilled employment there are not a few. All honor to them! What a service they are giving in these days when labor is more rare than fine gold. One of our men is custodian of a church as well as virtual assistant to the minister; others are in different types of industry, one of them well over eighty! One eager spirit, longing to preach, finds more use for his printing press, with which he has supported himself in part. Here is Mr. X who is serving his community and himself as an agent for a useful product; and there is Mr. Y who learned and still practices the art of the stained glass window. In Vermont lives a minister in his mid-eighties who knows the use of square and hammer, nail and chisel, and makes and mends the furniture of the village; while in a Southern community many neighbors give God thanks daily for an ex-missionary and pastor who carpenters and paints for them.

II

What would a minister do without his garden! It is his gymnasium and his storehouse of sermon parables. The weeds are temptations and the power of evil. As he mows them down he is in spirit destroying the power of the Administration, Congress, the President, the military or the communists! Each upthrusting tongue and flower is a tender child to be nursed with loving care. What minister does not long, or

think that he longs, for a little place which he can call his own, where he can dig and delve, and perhaps add something to his budget? So we find very many of our retired ministers on the soil. Some of them are ambitious and are trying to run a regular farm. Some are turning their two or three acres to some lucrative use, as with flowers for the market. The majority, probably, are content with less. They love to garden and rejoice that the fruit of their labor reduces the bill at the grocery and the butcher's just a bit.

We ministers have more than ourselves to think of, for it is well known that men tend to die earlier than their wives and the widows on our Roll far outnumber the ministers. What may women hope to do in the years they are alone?

It is natural that most of them play or rather work, as grandmothers or helpers to sons or daughters. No one can reckon the priceless gifts they render. Not all, for some, and in increasing numbers, find that their abilities and skills are in demand according to their strength outside their homes. Some, as is natural, are in some form of church work. Offices ask for many, industry a few. There is the new profession of Baby Guarding. The elderly need companions and the sick a nurse. One community in Maine having known and loved its minister and his wife, when he died, impressed his widow as town treasurer and clerk, offices she held for many years till diminishing strength compelled her to relinquish part of the load. Not all, but some are like the woman of eighty-eight of whom her daughter wrote: "Mother enjoys good health. Active, she prepares our meals, washes and irons. She goes with me to do our weekly shopping and carries the purse. Almost always when I go out at night to the theatre or concert she goes with me. Her home-baked bread is famous among our friends. Like my father she is waiting cheerfully until she is called to go 'into the other room.'"

The secret of a successful old age, as we all know, is to keep one's interests fresh and well watered. Justice Oliver Holmes put it this way: "I am more afraid to lose interest than to grow old." A prominent physician in New York, who specializes in the new area of gerontology (old age) has written out a prescription for every person over sixty: "Run, work, service, God." In this we the ministry are without excuse if we pass into the penumbra of an eclipse. We have had the privilege of cultivating many interests. We ought to be in a mental position to look forward to our retirement as the opportunity to pursue hobbies, reading, study and cultural interests which in part have been denied thus far. One such was in the office just the other day, a friend from a theological faculty, who retired some ten years ago.

"I'm having the time of my life. I'm just what I want to do. I have no burdens. I have served my time of responsibilities. I teach in my church, I read, I go to the opera, to the theatre, to the concert, to lectures." His windows are open to every type of Jerusalem. I think of two men with fewer advantages but less zest in living. One has a famous stamp collection, and is compiling a current history from the newspaper which will in time be a prize for some library. The other—let us hear it from his own mouth, "Folks say to me, how do you enjoy life all alone? Well, I say, I have no books, I read and study them. When the weather to be out of doors, I keep busy. If I don't keep my hands occupied, I keep my mind active, and I don't have time to worry or wail. When life becomes static and useless and lacks ambition and purpose, it seems as though one has come to the end of the road."

To keep this attitude toward life all along the declining way, this is the victory of old age. How many victors we ought to honor along this road of tri-

umph. In Pilgrim Place there lives a little lady in her nineties. On her ninety-fourth birthday she replied to her felicitation, "Thank you, Mrs. C——, I really do not want to live to be too old." At ninety-seven "she is still beautiful, interesting and interested."

IV

Very surprising are some expressions of this will to live with a cheer. Said a woman of eighty, "I intend with the Lord's help to be cheerful and keep my health." Perhaps the palm goes to a vigorous man of over seventy, cultivator of flowers and preacher in a neighboring church: "I look forward each day with an eager expectation that there will be something new and exciting on the horizon."

Not everyone has a temperament so sanguine, but everyone of us, especially we ministers, can cultivate, as a phase of our Christian enterprise, an openness, moderation and friendliness, which will stand us in good stead when our powers slip away from us. Years ago there was a pastor known among all his fellows in the same city as an irenic spirit, even though not many agreed with his theology. Since then age has stolen upon him, but his sweetness of soul has not departed from him. "I do," he writes, "very little reading, as my eyesight is poor, but nature after all is the most wonderful of books and I revel in what it has to teach. My hearing is none too good, but I still can hear the whisperings of the winds and the songs of the birds and the gay laughter of the children."

How often we hear old people say that the hardest thing they have to bear is the loss of old friends, till they are left almost alone in the midst of the land. Not so with this man of over eighty, who wrote out of the childlikeness of his great age: "I have had my share of blows, but they have not embittered me, thanks to His grace. I lose my old friends one by one, but new ones are all the time

taking their place. I am happy in the love of people, children, even of animals and birds."

Incidental to old age are the ills that may attend it, with which we all must cope. It is at this point that we of the ministry are especially fortunate, for the faith which we have professed and to a degree attained will be our aid, lending us courage and peace. How else can we most successfully engage the hours of pain, and anticipate the time we shall cease to be? I like to think in this connection of numerous, for they are numerous, men and women who have served the churches, and now are served by the Lord in person. How else could this woman now one hundred years of age write as she did, "Arthritis is still my companion. It is also my friend, for it drives me closer to God and He helps." Another valiant spirit learned that he

had cataracts which perhaps could not be taken off. "Just in case," he wrote, "I am memorizing 600 hymns on the organ, and preparing at least 100 sermons I can preach offhand." This, too, is of course our stay and comfort in the "dumb Hour clothed in black" to which old age is the anteroom. With the faith which we have preached to others, the way may be flooded with light. Let two men testify who, past eighty, are receiving the reward of their trust. "I am facing without fear the breakdown of life's machinery, knowing that it is the price we pay for living. One thing I know—when it is finished I shall be satisfied with what the great Giver of Life shall have prepared for me." The other—let him voice his own exquisite faith. "I will never be well, but some day when He calls I will lay aside this body and enter the beautiful city of God."

The Congregational Board of Pastoral Supply

Its Organization and Services

The Rev. Horace G. Robson

Boston, Massachusetts

A Paper read before the Commission on the Ministry, January 17, 1951

THE Congregational Board of Pastoral Supply in Boston, like the other functional agencies of our churches, is a child of necessity. It began its life fifty-six years ago in that section of our country where Congregationalism is strongest and where the needs of the fellowship would naturally first become evident. Our more thoughtful leaders came to see that the churches needed more information and specialized guidance in the all-important matter of pastoral leadership and that our ministers needed assistance and counsel in making pastoral changes. The continu-

ing life and growing influence of the Board through the years is the convincing evidence that it has at least partially succeeded in meeting a basic necessity in the life of our free fellowship of autonomous congregations.

This fact has been most vividly brought out in some very recent history of the Board. Due to increasing costs of operation all along the line, and perhaps to certain faulty financing techniques, the Board confronted a serious financial crisis. Dr. Horace F. Holton, the then Executive Secretary, was compelled to borrow money on his personal note to

meet the Board's current expenses. In the due course of events, Dr. Holton, with commendable frankness and fine leadership, confronted his Board of Directors, and, I believe, this Commission, with the distressing realities of the situation.

Growing out of this honest facing of the facts by the responsible leadership of the Board itself, and of our denominational leaders, certain things became nearly evident. In the first place there was the strong conviction that the Board served a much needed function in the life of our denomination and that it would be a serious mistake to discontinue it. In the second place, that adequate steps should be taken for financing it, and a strong committee from our Directors was appointed which gave earnest study to the problem and finally came through with a plan which promises to keep the Board financially solvent. I hasten to add that this highly desirable outcome, which I believe was achieved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, would not have resulted apart from the intelligent interest and splendid generosity of this Commission. For this, on behalf of our Board, I wish to express our sincere thanks.

The third very desirable consequence flowing out of our financial crisis was the general recognition that it is now necessary to rethink the specific ways in which the Board can function most effectively and relate itself most helpfully and harmoniously to the responsibility for pastoral placement which the Minnell resolution placed on our State Superintendents. That resolution read, in part—

2. That it be the recognized policy of the fellowship that in general the responsibility to churches, boards, and ministers in the matter of placement be considered one of the functions of the conference offices.

3. That in areas or regions where practicable and where the conferences

are willing to cooperate in bearing the necessary expense there be set up boards of pastoral supply to render such services as are provided by the New England Board and the Mid-West Committee or as may be determined by the supporting conferences.

4. That such boards or committees be closely related to the Department of the Ministry with representatives appointed to serve either as active or coopted members of the Commission on the Ministry.

Thus a threatening crisis has resulted in greater stability and the promise of even greater usefulness. In response to the need for rethinking our procedures and relationships we have worked out, or are in the process of working out, separate agreements with the various New England State Conferences which seek to define fields of cooperative action and establish definite procedures whenever a pulpit vacancy occurs. We hope to enter eventually into similar understandings with all the Conferences of our eastern states, thereby avoiding misunderstanding, duplication of effort, and confusion of thought. Every church and every minister—that is, our entire fellowship—stands to profit by this clarification; for its purpose is not simply pleasant relations, important as they are, but increased efficiency of operation in serving both our churches and our ministers.

As I understand the genius of Congregationalism, our Associations, State Conferences, and recognized Boards exist simply as functional agencies of the people of our churches. They do not exist of, for, or by themselves, although at any given moment of their existence they do possess a corporate reality. They are what I like to call "fellowship agencies" designed to make us more effective collectively in the impact of our Christian witness on the world in general and in our relationship to the entire Christian community. It is only as the total fellowship is strengthened through them that

they have any justifiable reason for existence. The Board of Pastoral Supply fully recognizes this principle and is motivated by the purpose to measure up to this test. But just how are we attempting at the present time to measure up?

First of all we are an office of ministerial records. Our files now contain approximately 4500 of them. This represents an enormous amount of work over a fairly long period of years in which the methods of securing information and the exact nature of the information sought have changed greatly. We make no claim to perfection in this matter and pledge ourselves to seek continuing improvement in the light of experience.

Our records are designed to present, first, a brief but important personal history with emphasis upon education and churches served; second, an appraisal of a man's personality, his fields of greatest emphasis, his methods of work, general qualifications for the ministry, and his achievements in the ministry; third, if married, to give certain information about the basic attitude and personal traits of his wife. There will probably never be complete agreement among us as to the specific information which should be acquired, but our present form represents a wide cross-section of opinion and many years of experience. A record is kept of suggestions for improvements and with practically every new printing at least slight changes are made. With the continued help of all perhaps some day the perfect form will emerge!

The Church Questionnaire. Churches are interested in information about available ministers, but ministers are also interested in information about available churches. For thirteen years we have been requesting churches to answer a detailed questionnaire about themselves so that a minister might become more intelligent about a vacancy before, if he so wishes, permitting his name to be presented as a possible candidate. At any

rate, he has the same right to information about the church as the church has to information about him. It has become a part of our routine procedure to request such information from a church as soon as a vacancy is known to us. Unfortunately the churches are not fully cooperative in this matter, but there is an increasing recognition of the value of such cooperation both for the churches involved and for the ministers. For it is becoming evident to them that the time and energy of both would frequently be conserved, and most important of all the whole pastoral placement process would proceed more intelligently and consequently, I believe, more successfully.

The Questionnaire covers—

- (1) The Community—its type, size, religious, cultural and industrial organizations. The relation of the church involved to the other churches as to size, cooperation, and financial resources.
- (2) The Church Plant—including the parsonage, as to age, style, equipment, and state of repairs.
- (3) Organization—does the church have a workable constitution and by-laws? How many standing committees, and their functioning. How many staff members?
- (4) The financial condition of the church—its home and benevolent budgets, methods of raising money, salaries.
- (5) The organization of their program of Religious Education.
- (6) The church's attitude toward the world mission of Christianity, and its cooperation with other churches and church agencies.
- (7) Also music—type of worship—average attendance—general theological attitude—and the spirit and outlook for the future.

Just to answer such a questionnaire is frequently an education in churchmanship and a challenge to its leadership to

measure up to a higher standard of church life.

Counselling is another important service of the Board of Pastoral Supply. There is scarcely a working day when there is not a steady stream of people, ministers and laymen, seeking to confer with the Executive Secretary regarding the problems growing out of the changing, or proposed changing, of ministers. These callers come not only from the New England states but from all sections of the country, although the vast majority are naturally from New England and the nearby states of the northeast. Likewise a large percentage of our mail has to do with the same sort of problem. The territorial range of such correspondence is much wider, and the percentage from states beyond our eastern area is much greater than I had personally anticipated in taking over the office last September. This type of service costs heavily in time and energy, but in my opinion the Board renders no more valuable service than this.

In addition to these personal conferences with ministers and laymen the Executive Secretary plans to meet at least three times a year with all the State Superintendents of New England, and I am hoping that New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania might be added this year, to discuss the vacancies in each Conference and the men desiring, or needing, to change.

Besides, I am now in the process of working out a plan of regular periodic conferences with each Superintendent to deal with the same problem in his par-

ticular area. Several such conferences have already been held, and have proved most fruitful. This is not exactly a new procedure, but needs to be systematized, intensified, and broadened in its scope to include as many eastern Superintendents as is feasible, for it is now generally felt that the Board should be the recognized agency of the whole eastern section of the country, and the willing servant of the rest of the nation as its facilities may be needed. I hope to see this broader concept of the Board's responsibility become embodied in its by-laws, since it is already a fact in actual practice.

In conclusion may I summarize this statement by saying that the Congregational Board of Pastoral Supply came into existence because of a deeply felt need for such an agency by the Conferences, churches, and ministers. For then, as now, the churches needed information about ministers, and ministers needed information about churches; both needed to know of the availability of each, and both needed friendly counsel and guidance. The Conferences needed a sort of ministerial clearing house, and the ministers and churches needed an agency for facilitating contacts and the exchange of ministers between states and sections of the country. Because the Board has met this need, although only partially and imperfectly, it continued until now. It is my sincere hope that with an ever-increasing effectiveness and deepening sense of mission this agency of our fellowship may truly serve the broader and abiding realities of the Kingdom of our Lord and Master.

A Statement of Faith

I BELIEVE in one God, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, Author of all truth, beauty, and goodness, Father and Judge of all men.

I believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, who in his life, teaching, and death upon the Cross revealed to men the redemptive love of God.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, God in man, Comforter, and Source of peace and power.

I believe in the universal Church of Christ, which is the community of all believers, as the ongoing Body of Christ through which his will is worked in the world.

I believe in the Bible as the primary source of spiritual truth and inspiration, and I believe that new light is yet to break forth from God's holy Word.

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift. Amen.

THE REV. RALPH W. JEFFS, *Occidental College*

Concerning the Recoil of Idealism

The Editor

THIS department suggested in the last issue that preachers might live haunted lives, haunted, that is, by the bright phantoms of elusive sermons which never quite get preached. They have no monopoly on that. Poets and artists are their comrades. The poet thus modulates his music. Browning knew: "and just when we are safest there is a sunset touch, a fancy from a flower bell, someone's death, a chorus ending from Euripides"—and there's enough not only for a retinue of hopes and fears, but for a poet's opulence of song. In this high sense, Browning and Shakespeare and Dante were the most haunted of all the poets.

Well—it is not exactly a "chorus ending," but there is a sentence from Justice Holmes, also already noted in the *QUARTERLY*, which has this quality. "We aim at the infinite and our arrow falls back in flames." Commager quoted this in his

study of the "American mind" in general and Justice Holmes' mind more specifically. The Editor has not found nor sought the context; no matter. It could be set into so many contexts and amplified almost endlessly, for it has in it both the splendor and paradox of life. One does not force it too much in applying it to the spacious regions of our hopes, our dreams and our ideals. These do not always aim at the infinite, on the contrary. And sometimes they do find their mark. Nor do they always fall back in flames, they are more likely to fall back blunted or broken. But however they recoil upon us who aimed them, the ways in which we receive them, fallen back, have an importance not easily put into words.

The psychologists and the psychiatrists do have between them a lot of highly technical words about it all, which come to this: that the right disposal of disap-

ointments, frustrations, disillusionments and what have you, is so important in any wise conduct of life, that failure here entails curious and far-reaching consequences. Bookshops are full of books which directly or indirectly are dealing with just such matters. They are addressed to a fear-haunted and disillusioned time which does not really know the sources of its own diseases, offering releases and adjustments. Some of them seem to be dealing with symptoms rather than the real trouble, and prescribe anodynes, so to speak. But the response they are finding indicates the extent of the need they seek to meet.

A good deal of popular and effective preaching takes these lines. The calendar of the First Congregational Church in Detroit, with which the writer of these meditations has had a long intimacy, not only locates the Church geographically, as on the corner of Woodward and Forest Avenues, easily reached and with ample parking space, but locates it homiletically, as the church "where religion and psychology meet"—the response is filling the pews. An increasing number of pulpits can be thus located, perhaps not so specifically but with a growing recognition of the situation of congregations who see so much they have sought and hoped for lying in trampled dust. We aim at the infinite and our arrow falls back—in flames."

* * *

The effect of all this upon current theology is beyond debate. It is on the whole a reactionary theology with no very clear light upon its future course. For a while here in these United States aimed its arrows at the leaders of a now vanished generation whose hopes or a better order have failed so tragically—who perhaps expected too much too soon, and took too little account of the forces which opposed them, or how their arrows nobly aimed would fall back, quite literally, into the flames of war.

That always seemed to some of us an ungracious business since to have hoped too much and too generously is not of itself one of the seven cardinal sins, and it tended to encourage those who carried it on to think more highly of themselves than they should. But in ways sometimes plain to trace and sometimes hidden, current theologies are seamed with the reactions of those who have seen their ideals defeated and their hopes eclipsed. If a preacher should want a text for sermons along this line the Concordance will not help him much. There are texts enough with "fire" in them but they do not bear directly upon the theme.

One *could* use Elijah under the Juniper Tree—he too expected too much, too soon—and it's easy to take one's scorched or broken arrows which have fallen back, off under some equivalent of a Juniper Tree, say "I have had enough of this," or else, magnifying oneself unduly, say "I am the only one left," or else grown cynical say "What's the use?" The grave music of Ecclesiastes repeats this motif over and over, futility of futilities, all is futility.

* * *

One may become a "realist," whatever that convenient word means, and conclude that he can neither realize his ideals nor wholly surrender them; aim at the infinite but mostly expect the arrows to fall back. There is something to be said for that attitude. It forbids Utopianism, another word lately much under attack. It anticipates failure and is not too much disturbed by it. It does save us from disillusionment and it has a deal of human nature and human history behind it. Things do get on in that way and high causes, in some partial fashion, get realized. But it is a delicately balanced attitude, hard to maintain and more likely to weaken effort than to furnish it marching music.

Unless one over-hopes, unless one seeks "the high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard" he is likely to

stop too soon. Because Jesus laid upon his Disciples the spell of the apparently unattainable and sent them out to achieve the impossible, they made their steep ascent to Heaven through peril, toil and pain. They had a duty beyond duty and for them the first mile was only the threshold.

The prophets knew the same secret. They always dared to hope too much and to promise too much. But from them we inherit so brave a marching music that even broken modulations of it have been heard like trumpet calls across the millenniums. *No*. When our arrows begin to fall back in flame is not the time to be too sensible, or too cautious, and if, not to press Holmes' analogy too far, the arrow falls back in flame it has at least been consumed in intensities.

* * *

But this is too rhetorical. It is more to the point to ask why so many things, desirable by any test, defensible by any test, persist in being unrealizable. Theologians say because we are sinners, the cynical say because we are stupid and these answers between them cover a good deal of ground. Kinder enquirers say that both our souls and our societies are all tangled up and confused like King Arthur's last great battle in the west, waged in the fog. There are so many kinds of ideals. Some of them are so intimately personal that the realization of them lies in the devotion and discipline of our own souls, and Christian faith and experience add "by God's grace and help." St. Paul knew this. There are no braver passages about the victorious conduct of life than his, anywhere. Nor more complete and luminous anticipations of a Christian goodness which, he believed, lay within the power of his unfinished saints. He made of obstacles and defeats stairs by which to climb. He anticipated the mutations of which so much is now made, through which apparent failure on one level can by faith and courage be carried to another level and

issue in spiritual qualities of enduring value.

There are ideals whose realization so depends upon vast and cooperative action that the individual seems to be negligible in their realization, though the tragedy of their defeat haunts him. This present world order is like that: international peace, social justice, even the normal ethical decencies of life are corporate enterprises, subject to hostilities and entanglements which girdle the globe. Something of this one suspects must have been in Justice Holmes' mind. He saw the tensions and hostilities in almost every field and circumstance of American life come up before the court, in such ways that justice seemed beyond juridical decision; as though he never reached the highest he sought and grew old in the travail of it. There is no saying here what all this involves. One can only say it needs a consideration it does not for the most part sufficiently receive; for, amongst so many other things, it involves the validity and power of any Christian order—and, centrally, how ideals can be creatively implemented. Otherwise they are a host with bright banners but with no power to carry them on.

* * *

The passages to which a preacher may turn with most hope for help are not Elijah under the Juniper Tree. They are the recitative of the "suffering servant," the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who sees the vision and pays its price. It is not easy to be an idealist. The word itself carries reproach, or scorn, or dismissal—"only an idealist!" For all that it belongs to a great fellowship, since idealists between them have finally brought to realization about everything worth inheriting and hold the promise and potency of about everything worth continuing. They are used to seeing their arrows fall back in flames.

If they are wise they ask why, examine the ideals themselves, recondition them so to speak and keep on. They

earn by failure and are sustained by faith and they know they are never alone. There is between them the communication of a valiant company across whose long ascent there have always lain two shadows: the shadow of their own crosses, which makes their ways perilous; the shadow, as they are Christians, of the Cross of Christ, which makes their ways triumphant.

* * *

All this began to be written on Good Friday and in its first writing continued and ended in Holy Week. There could never have been in our American life more complete fission between what the radio reported and the meaning and messages of the week. If any commentator felt it, he gave no sign: "Just as if Jesus had never lived and as if he had never died."

* * *

The QUARTERLY has already noted Andrew Drummond's story of American Protestantism. There must be a deal of reading and writing going on in Eadie Manse since Dr. Drummond has now published a book on *The Church in English Fiction*, in which "English" means the English-speaking world including us. Edward Chapman wrote a classic book on the same general subject, *English Literature in Account with Religion*. Nothing specific in this field seems to have been done since until Drummond

took over. His books are always eminently readable and this one must be the usufruct of what would seem a lifetime of familiarity with the literature considered. There is some lost motion in its development but it is admirably done and has one engaging quality. It makes the reader want to read, himself, the books Drummond has written about. Published by Edgar Backus, Leicester, England. There will doubtless be an American edition.

* * *

James Dalton Morrison *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (Harper & Brothers, 1948) is the noblest of anthologies, a treasure trove. There are 619 pages of it besides the indices, but it has God's plenty between its covers. It is probably expensive but it is, as near as may be, a preacher's must. The poets have also aimed at the infinite but their arrows are songs which some touch of flame makes immortal.

Amidst the uncertainties of a shaken time, the constancies of the season have an assuring power and May is a part of the Grace of God. Earth's instinct with spirit everywhere—

Each tree an inspiration, every clod
A lovely lyric, every star a prayer:
Each mountain top a stepping stone to
God.

THOMAS LANDERS

The Young Minister Looks at His Job

The Rev. Frederick L. Fagley

Secretary Emeritus of the General Council, New York, N. Y.

THE young ministers who were asked to give information for this report numbered 170 persons who were, or had been, in the Congregational Christian ministry all or part time since they were ordained in 1938.

Twelve years after graduation is a reasonable period of time for a young minister to know something about his job and yet not to be too far away from his seminary days to forget his youthful hopes and aspirations.

To get some of the statistics out of the way, let it be said that of the 170, 103 were ordained by the Congregational Christian Churches and 67 were transferred into the Congregational Christian Churches after being ordained by another denomination.

Of the 170, 128 responded to the questionnaire and of the 42 persons from whom we had no information, 27 had to be listed as unknown by the postmaster or by former acquaintances. From 15 whose whereabouts are known, no help could be secured.

Of the total of 170 ministers, 107, or 63 per cent are still in religious work classified as follows: pastors of Congregational Christian Churches 93, chaplains 5, pastors in other denominations 3, Secretaries 3, missionaries 3. It should be said that some of these men ordained in 1938 were ordained not to parish ministry but to ministry of teaching or of administration. Of the 63 not now in the ministry, 27 as noted above are now unknown, 14 are teachers, 8 in social work, miscellaneous employment 6, business 4, housewives 3, dead 1. All these categories of employment are represented in the replies.

It may be observed that those still in the pastorate, though not unmindful of the problems and handicaps of the ministry, write first of its opportunities and blessings, while those not in the pastorate speak first of the hindrances and then of the opportunities from which they have turned away. In making the study I was totally unprepared for the enthusiasm with which many of these men spoke of their jobs.

I

It was discovered that the majority of these men are now in their third pastorate. They are at the turning point. Many years' study of statistics on length of pastorates justifies, I think, the observation that it is from the third pastorate that the future trend of a minister's

career may be charted. So we sought to pick the minds of these men at just this stage of their careers, and most of them responded with plentiful information as to their thoughts, their fears and their hopes.

If there were space, how I would love to share quite fully the deeply moving letters of some of these men concerning the glories of the ministry. How they write—"The ministry is better in every possible way than I expected; friends, opportunities, sense of divine approval, finances." "There is a deep personal satisfaction in being identified with a great ongoing enterprise upon which the future of all mankind rests." "The ministry offers a man the chance to pit all he has of thought, religion, physical strength against fearful odds and is blessed to see here and there the miracle of spiritual growth, not only in himself but in his people and in the community."

And so they write, "The constant challenge brings a thrill every day." Quite a number write that the pastorate is an "exciting adventure." One writer sums up his letter with the words, "The joys of the ministry must be experienced, they cannot be anticipated." "The response of the people to spiritual truth is such a joy that I would not exchange my place with any man." And finally, "The ministry is a terrible job but a glorious calling."

The future of the Church is safe in the hands of such young men, most of them in their middle or late thirties. One such in any Association or Conference or community will tend to leaven the whole lump. More strength to them.

II

With so many letters in such mood it is educative to turn to the second section of the letter of inquiry, "In what ways have you found the ministry more difficult and disappointing than you expected?" The comments were, "It is more difficult, but not disappointing but a challenge." "The only difficulty I have is that

the task is so much greater than I expected." There was general agreement that people are the chief difficulty, some promise much and do little, some have a holier-than-thou attitude, some self-centered as the poor little rich woman who complained that "the minister did not come and speak to me today."

The low idea of churchmanship on the part of the pew causes many a young minister to pause and consider. To quote one, "How childlike many grown-up people are in their outlook on religion and the mission of the Church!" Another writes—"The people seem so far from the Communion of the Saints." Still another, "It is hard work to keep God's people in order"—while one other writer put his finger on the guilty with, "The devil seems to be getting stronger," to which comment we all might add supporting evidence.

It is interesting to note that only a very few active pastors mention financial matters, but of those who have left the pastorate the larger number affirmed that finances were determinative in the change. There were two continuing in the pastorate who mention "the almighty dollar" and the "lack of books and cultural opportunities due to financial limitations." On the other hand, several pastors wrote that the financial problem which they feared before entering the ministry had not developed.

As might be expected some reported that routine tasks irritate; another was annoyed by "the multiplicity of errands given to him because he does not have to work and always has free time on his hands."

Some men have left the pastorate because of pure and simple loneliness, and several pastors mention this as their greatest disappointment.

To get the picture we must recall that in many cases the young man has gone out from a home where he had close and loving companionship, and from a church where he was often looked upon with favor by his pastor and by the leading

members, to a college and seminary where he had fellows with like-minded and similarly intentioned young persons. Following these experiences he went into a community where he was unknown, and often at a distance from any sympathetic and understanding pastor.

These young men, looking back on their first years when they had the hardest problems and the least experience, write of this burden. The ministers who were within reach were busy at home or were waiting to see if the young man would sink or swim. If after a few years he was "still alive and kicking," he might be noticed. And the same is true of some state and national denominational officials. Let him make a name for himself "if he did not have a father or a brother with a name to lend him." This sense of being alone is far more prevalent than one might expect and is especially evident in letters of those who have sought other employment.

III

Again, in looking at his job many a young minister indicated that his problem of great importance is his own uncertainty of the resources of the Gospel for today's needs, or of his understanding of how to utilize those resources of which he is conscious. "The experience of having to stand by and see people going from bad to worse, and to be able to do nothing about it is hard to endure." One man writes, "My problem is myself." And the same thought is expressed by several others.

It is well to recall that at the time these men were in seminary—1935 to 1938—personal counseling had not received major emphasis in seminary courses of study. Many of these young ministers feel that they are temperamentally and scholastically unfitted to meet the problems of their people. One writes, "I cannot help some who are in desperate need of the healing powers of religion." Another, "To have to witness the trag-

edies of life helplessly, brings one to the depths of despair." They know that the trained psychiatrist looks upon religion as a powerful force in the long, infinitely delicate task of rebuilding human personality. The lack of training in this field is recognized and regretted by many of these young ministers.

The minister's job in the field of religious education was discussed by 22 writers out of the 128 replying. The two optimistic comments in this field were—"The best thing about the ministry is the opportunity to work with young people," and "To see young people blossom out and to think I have had some part in it is awe-inspiring, and when I get to wondering if the Lord would not be better served if I were ditch digging, I think of these experiences and remain a minister."

On the other hand, the 20 letters that dealt at length with the minister's job in religious education placed the Church School as the number one problem. This was stated in these various ways: "My big problem is to make the Church School go"; another, "To get Church School teachers is my headache"; another, "My difficult problem is to inspire parents to give some attention to the Church School, to back it up and find ways to meet the terrible competition that the Church School faces today."

IV

The letters from those who have left the pastorate show that the constant sense of failure in Church School management was the second most frequently mentioned reason for seeking a change.

I am sure the reader will realize that there is much grain in this grist that is not being ground in this brief grinding of the stones.

Another item which these young ministers were asked to discuss was, what do they think now of their training? They were asked: "As you look back over your twelve years, which seminary course

has helped you the most in your job?" First of all, let me make one matter clear—in this study no one was asked to name his seminary and the only one who did so mentioned his seminary in another connection. However, in a study made two years ago of sources for ministers for our churches, it was found that the 1938 ordained men and women had graduated from 34 seminaries.

There did not appear any hesitancy in discussing the seminary preparation as evaluated after twelve years' ministry. It should be noted that many of the writers emphasized the value of the seminary preparation and the continuing influence of helpful personalities of faculty members. At least one-third of the writers asserted that their seminary course was as thorough and as well rounded as could be. The suggestions for changes were usually given in good spirit. The hope was expressed by some that seminary officials who came to know the substance of what was written would not think they were being criticized too severely, for no doubt they were conscientious, hard-working men. The trouble most of these young men think, is that the higher-up men who make the over-all decisions are not too closely related to actual church work and are to a degree innocent of the sort of problems the young minister faces in his earlier pastorate.

Now as to the rating of the seminary courses: those that have been most helpful for the job as pastor were first, Practical Theology, and second, Church History including Denominational History. Practical Theology was given this high rating as it helped them to use their "equipment of head and heart to the fullest extent," and "This course was put immediately to the test from the first day." This subject was criticized, however, as some of the instruction was aimed at the administration of a large city church and only incidentally at the work the young men had to do in the first years of their pastorate. As on

can put it, "The instruction we received applied to the work and the problems we would face 20 years later when after successful experience we might reach the sort of church these men talked about." It was suggested that they would have been better prepared if some of the men in the faculty had profited by the experience of a pastorate in a small rural church of one room, where the Church school occupied the sanctuary before the worship service.

V

These young ministers write that the courses in History, including Denominational History, helped them to an understanding of churchmanship and gave to them a sense of belonging—"belonging to a great institution that has called out intense loyalties and for which multitudes have worked and sacrificed even unto death."

The denominational aspect of Church history was mentioned by some of these young men who wrote that before going to seminary they knew practically nothing of the contribution their own denomination had made to the enrichment of the cultural life of the people. Interestingly enough it was suggested that the study of other denominations had been helpful and it was emphasized that such study should receive added attention by the seminaries. The reason for such emphasis is the fact that now the local churches are trying to work in closer relationship with each other in the community and information about other churches is absolutely necessary. Also it was urged that such information is needed on national and world levels. And how do we need factual information on the Roman Catholic Church! "How abysmally ignorant we are on this most important subject!" All of this adds up to the conclusion that these young pastors are becoming broad churchmen and so they seek to increase their understanding of other religious bodies.

Another favored course was Preaching and Speech. Many of these young men think they would be doing better work if they had received more instruction in speech. One very successful preacher sums the matter up thus—"Either a man can preach or he cannot. If he cannot, he will not long have the opportunity of proving he cannot. If he can, there is not much he can be taught but there are some things he can be helped to learn, and to this assistance far more help should be given." Another in urging the strengthening of these courses wrote: "One cannot save souls unless he can put his message across."

Bible study ranks fourth as of value in the actual work of the minister. There is considerable opinion that Bible study is far more important than most young men understood it to be while in seminary. They write what Bible study they had was all right *as far as it went*. Several writers emphasized that not until they got into the parish did they realize how poor they were in Biblical interpretation. They are finding in their own study rich ore they never before dreamed of. Some of these men wrote that preaching on secular topics may bring the crowd, but preaching on the message of the Bible builds the Church. Hence the increasing appreciation of Bible knowledge and interpretation.

General Theology and New Testament Theology rank fifth, but several men write they were too young to understand the value of what was offered them, and now after twelve years if they could take a year off they would like to go somewhere and study Christian theology all the day through.

Religious Education courses in the seminary rank low in their estimation. The main reason given is that the teachers were not greatly inspiring or instructive. Many of them had a lot of untried theories and were hazy as to ends and means. "They should be able to practice as well as teach good pedagogy." They feel there is too much confusion as to

what there is in religion that yields itself to the educative process, or what are the material and the processes of Religious Education. One discriminating writer observed that happily now Religious Education teachers realize, or at least in part, that secular educational techniques are not well adapted to Religious Education. It should be said that much progress has been made in strengthening these courses in the twelve years since these men were ordained.

VI

In conclusion, may I quote from a long letter from one of the most successful pastors: "I attended two seminaries; in one all the courses gave a roundness, each contributed to the whole and the faculty was a team, while in the other, the faculty was made up of *prima donnas*, no personal relationship to each other or with the students—and the result, a compartmental hodge-podge."

Some facts stand out from this brief and partial analysis of the thought of younger ministers, based on their comments on three of the ten topics suggested for their consideration after twelve years from ordination—

1. That during these twelve years there 170 persons ordained in 1938 have been well sifted, as only 107 are still in some form of religious work, of whom 93 are pastors. Perhaps some additional sifting should have been done before or during seminary years.

2. That more attention should be given to maturing young men for the ministry spiritually and intellectually, through personal attention by seminary instructors and by older ministers.

3. That more attention should be given to the preparation of young ministers for a personalized ministry that they may deal effectively with the terribly delicate problems of individual living in these confusing days.

4. That the young ministers who came through the difficult first years and remain steadfast, find the ministry a grand and glorious experience and that of those who have turned away some have an abiding sense of loss. They look back upon something very precious that has passed them by and a few do not understand why, and perhaps they never will, the more the pity.

Gleanings from the Field

The Rev. Fred S. Buschmeyer

Director of the Department of the Ministry

SINCE his last report, your Director's "field" of travel and survey has extended from Billings, Montana, in the west, to Boston, Massachusetts, in the east; and from Rochester, New York, to Atlanta, Georgia; with a good many interesting stops in between.

A three-day visit with the Ministers of Montana at their annual Mid-Winter Retreat left the strong impression that neither the quality nor the appreciation of our Fellowship runs thin as one moves

out into the wide-open spaces away from Boston and New York. On the contrary, both the seriousness of our responsibilities and the enjoyment of our fellowship in service seemed to be intensified in an area where it is often necessary to travel from one hundred to three hundred miles to find your nearest Congregational Christian neighbor-minister.

A similar appreciation of our fellowship was found in a visit to the Army and Air Force School for Chaplains, at

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Considering the relative smallness of our denomination it was a pleasant surprise to find six Congregational Christian Chaplains in the student body of approximately fifty men. It was through the interest of another of our men, Chaplain G. Adolf Koch, who is on the Faculty, that I had the privilege of visiting with Ernest L. Bengston, Jr., of Connecticut; Richard Billingsley, of Pennsylvania; John A. Kingsbury, of North Carolina; Goldwin S. Pollard, of Maine; Linwood C. Potter, of Vermont; and Grover C. Rieger, of Massachusetts. By the time this appears in print these men will be scattered all over the country with their various "outfits," and their fellowship at Carlisle will be only a memory—but a happy one I'll wager—if that isn't the wrong word to use in the light of the recent investigations.

I should like to take this opportunity, while reporting on some of our Chaplains, to thank the men of our ministry—both within the age limits and above the present age limits—for their responses to the Department of the Ministry letter of inquiry about potential Chaplaincy resources in our fellowship. To date we are still meeting all the requests that have come to us from the various branches of the Armed Forces. From the letters that come to my desk I would say that it is obvious that there are no rabid militarists amongst us, but that there are many who feel the obligation of their ministry to stand by and serve the young men of their parishes who are caught in the terrible consequences of our mutual individual and collective failures.

* * *

It is interesting, and sometimes a bit frustrating, to witness and participate in the struggle to bring various parts of our organized Christian activities into cooperative relationship in the new National Council of Churches of Christ in America. I have in mind our efforts to find the proper place and relationship for

the old Commission on the Ministry of the Federal Council. The problem turns around the question, how can an organization be set up that will meet the needs of (a) the C. O. M. and its concern for the parish ministry; (b) the Student Volunteer Movement and its student-centered concern for ministries beyond the local church; and (c) the growing demand for greater attention to the cultivation of a sense of Christian Vocation among all Christian people? Obviously all three interests are essential. But how to bring them into a working relationship to form a single Commission? That is something else again!

* * *

The General Commission on Chaplains is experiencing similar growing pains in its endeavor to create a United Protestant Youth Fellowship, to replace the earlier Christian Service Men's League, in order to offer to young men in the Armed Forces something that will continue the kind of experience they have known in their various denominational Youth Fellowships. The new name symbolizes the fact that real progress is being made at this point. Another problem, much more complicated than may at first appear, is the problem of relating the General Commission to the new National Council of Churches. The difficulty here lies in the fact that the General Commission now serves many religious groups not included in the present membership of the National Council—some by their own choice, and others by reason of their being unable to meet the membership requirements of the National Council. In the light of the united approach to the Chaplaincy on the part of both our Jewish and our Roman Catholic brethren, it is obvious that Protestantism wants and needs to maintain as united an approach as possible. The present report is—progress, with goodwill among all concerned.

Incidentally, I should like to assure

the members of our own fellowship that whatever the limitations of the General Commission on Chaplains—and what co-operative organization is completely free from them?—it is actually much more representative of the working leadership of our various denominations, and is much more cognizant of some of the deep problems involved in a Christian Ministry to Military Forces, than a recent article in the *Christian Century* would suggest. Suffice it to point out at the moment that the last Chairman of the General Commission was none other than the present President of the National Council of Churches, and many of the Commission's membership serve in similar capacities both on denominational and inter-denominational boards.

* * *

Within the last few weeks our Congregational Christian seminary seniors from Bangor, Boston University, Harvard, Andover-Newton, Hartford, Yale, and Union, have spent one whole day, under the leadership of the Department of the Ministry, with the men who serve as the chief executives of the missionary boards and the various councils of our fellowship, either in Boston or in New York. It is our hope that this plan of promoting better personal acquaintance, and more detailed understanding of the actual working of the "agencies" of our fellowship, for men entering our ministry may be extended to include seminarians in the central and far western parts of our country. The spirit is willing, now, but we have not yet found the way to meet the costs of such long-distance transportation (or absence from classes) as would be involved. To one conviction we hold fast, however: if Fellowship is the working technique by which Congregational Christian people seek to "build the Kingdom," then every Congregational Christian Minister ought to be personally acquainted with the everyday efforts of the boards and the personnel who strive to implement the

outreach of the Gospel as it is preached in the local church.

* * *

I have just returned from two student Conferences which give me great reason to believe that we are going to have an improved Churchmanship both among our lay people and among our ministers of the future. At Andover-Newton I participated in a Conference which brought together locally selected collegians from all of New England to consider the claims and opportunities of the Christian Ministry. These men had not yet decided for the Ministry; nor were they asked to make any decision at the Conference. But they did live together for two and a half days with men capable of presenting them with an objective picture of what the Christian Ministry is all about, and of what its possibilities are in the present world.

The other Conference was held under the auspices of the Student Christian Movement in New York State and was aimed directly toward giving students a better understanding of The Church, the opportunities and obligations of Churchmanship, and the purposes, programs, and leadership of their own denominations. Here was a conference to challenge any tendency of students to be led away from the church rather than back into the church because of their campus-centered experience of religion during their college and university years.

* * *

Let me pass on to you a few brief comments from Charles Spencer, recently of Ohio, who is attending New College, Edinburgh, Scotland, this year: "Here in Edinburgh I have been very much taken up with our diminutive but powerful Principal Charles Duthie, of the Scottish Congregational College, in Edinburgh. He lectures in New College, which as you probably know is the Presbyterian Seminary in connection with the University of Edinburgh. Principal Duthie

is a member of their Senatus, and so I have him and Principal John Baillie as my thesis advisors.

"The Scottish Congregational College is doing a noble piece of work here where our denomination has to function in the presence of a kindly but almost overwhelming majority denomination. According to my comparison of Year Book figures now with those of about four years ago, the Congregational churches are losing ground in membership. There are about 300 of them in all Scotland. Our largest churches here are of about 100 or 500 members. I have visited four Congregational churches so far and I find the people very warm and friendly—although there is a fine sense of reserve that is almost indefinable.

"We have four Congregational students here in New College from the U.S.A. In addition to myself there are:

Fred Manthey, from Akron, who has had work at Boston, and is going back there to get his B.D. next year; Roland Schleuter, of Union Seminary, N. Y.; and Kwai Sing Chang, a B.D. from Princeton, ordained Congregational in 1948, who has been serving the Union Church in Lanai City, Hawaii."

* * *

The next meeting of the Commission on the Ministry is called for June 19-21, at the Massachusetts Conference Center at Framingham. It is hoped that this meeting will be able to put our proposed Handbook for the Commission and for Conference Committees on the Ministry in shape for the consideration of Conference Committees by early Fall. If you have special considerations which you would like to put before the Commission do not hesitate to send them along.

Report of the Associates in Reading

The Rev. Richard P. Carter (Suffield, Conn.), Reporting

THE Associates in Reading and Discussion of the Commission on the Ministry have just met at Benext Lodge in Connecticut to draw up the list of recommended reading for this summer and fall. You will find it attached below. The primary list includes books generally agreed on as "musts" for the alert minister. The supplementary list is composed of titles necessary for well-rounded reading. Each book has had to pass the criteria of furnishing the foundation for stimulating and profitable group discussion and pertinence to our ministry. Heretofore one list has been published each year. This fall there will be a second list for winter and spring reading.

One cannot be sensitive to our times without realizing how important it is for minds to meet in objective and sympathetic and friendly study. The sharp

clashes within our country that are so divisive are not the result of our having different goals. They indicate separate roads to the same goal. Kindred hearts without kindred minds can produce distressing situations that can become nigh fatal. Even for us to know the mind of Christ requires testing our minds with others of like spirit.

Times of intense dispute and peril, as these surely are, offer one great temptation to our ministry; namely, that of moving on the defensive. There are so many evils to cry out against. But merely being against the wrong does not fulfill our obligation as Christian ministers. Our main purpose is to bear testimony for. The first meaning of "protest" is "to assert, affirm, to be a witness." It is from this that Protestantism derives its title. We are called to bear witness for Jesus Christ. Let us not be maneuvered from

this position. The Christian ministry demands the best of our minds and spirits. Both the Director of the Department of the Ministry and the Chairman of the Associates in Reading welcome your comments and suggestions.

Summer and Fall 1951 Recommended Reading List of the Associates in Reading and Discussion of the Department of the Ministry, Congregational Christian Churches

PRIMARY LIST

"Here I Stand," by Roland H. Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$4.75

This book is the mature offering of an outstanding scholar whose chosen field is sixteenth-century church history, and who adds to research, and long familiarity with sources, a gift for dramatic organization and vivid narration. Research scholars have not commonly been so gifted. Result: an authoritative and eminently readable biography sure of a high and lasting place in Lutheriana—if there is such a word.

St. Paul had his midday in the Damascene desert; St. Augustine had his garden in Milan; Martin Luther was stunned by a bolt of lightning near a German village: "St. Anne, help me!" he cried; "I will become a monk." And history began to be redated. Bainton begins with that, and because within a dozen years Luther began to be, and has since continued to be, one of the most controversial figures in the history of the Christian church, his biographer's "first endeavor must be to understand the man." That endeavor is from cover to cover the control of this biography."—G. G. A.

"The American Mind," by Henry Steele Commager. Yale University Press, \$5.00

In what Arnold Toynbee calls "a time of troubles," the minds of thoughtful men turn to studies of history for an interpretation of both the creative and destructive forces in society. And now that our nation finds itself forced into an unparalleled position of world leadership, we are seeking out such studies in order that we may come to an enlightened self-knowledge. Henry Steele Commager, Columbia University's brilliant Professor of History, has given us a major contribution in his "The American Mind."

It is an interpretation of American thought and character since the 1880's worthy of the high standard set by Vernon L. Parrington's "Main Currents of American Thought." Here is an exciting book that keeps the reader on mental tiptoe, proving once again that a scholarly study of history need never be dull. Rich in scholarship, and seasoned with a delightful humor, this work will take its rightful place among the great contributions of the best minds of our time. For purposes of fruitful group discussion perhaps no other book in this field will serve as well.

"Christianity and History," by Herbert Butterfield. Charles Scribner's Sons, \$2.00

Contemporary thinking in this revolutionary age is much concerned with the meaning of history: does it have any? is mankind going somewhere and can the historian exhibit the past as progressive approach to the goal? Among the recent books on these questions (by Loewith, Niebuhr and John Baillie) this volume by the professor of Modern History at Cambridge University is outstanding. Butterfield thinks clearly and writes lucidly as a professional scholar who is also a practicing churchman. He will be found very helpful by those who are perplexed about

the distinction between facts of history and facts of faith, and the way in which they may be linked together in Christian understanding. Definitely a book to buy and use.

A Primer of Christianity," Oxford University Press, \$3.75 (3 Volumes)

Three books in one:

"The Beginning of the Gospel," by T. W. Manson \$1.50

"The Furtherance of the Gospel," by R. W. Moore 1.75

"The Truth of the Gospel," by G. B. Caird 1.75

A readable book in the Bible, Church History and Theology. Good for laymen and ministers. Will provoke discussion. Sound scholarship. A book which will be helpful to all church members.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST

Deep Is the Hunger," by Howard Thurman. Harper & Bros., \$2.50

A book of brief but very penetrating meditations by one of the most perceptive and persuasive ministers of America.

The Religious Revolt Against Reason," by L. Harold DeWolf. Harper & Bros., \$2.50

A study of the rejection of the use of reason in religious thinking by such writers as Kierkegaard, Barth, Niebuhr, and Brunner. Dr. DeWolf gives a clear answer to what he considers the recent overemphasis of neo-orthodox thinking and vigorous defense of the continued use both of reason and faith in Christian living.

The God We Worship," by Roger Hazelton. Macmillan Co., \$2.00

An interesting, able, and warm interpretation of the God in Christ that we meet in church worship. Incisive, rational, and reverent.

Positive Protestantism," by Hugh Thompson Kerr, Jr. Westminster Press, \$2.75

The Gospel is the center of Christianity, not a church. Protestantism follows the Gospel and hence is vastly more than a split-off or branch of Roman Catholicism. A stimulating book.

Neurosis and Human Growth," by Karen Horney, M.D. W. W. Norton & Co., \$4.50

A constructive book on psychoanalysis; helpful for pastors in meeting the needs of some members.

A Life of Jesus," by Edgar J. Goodspeed. Harper & Bros., \$3.00

This is one of the most unusual biographies on Jesus of Nazareth ever written. Not because of its unique elaborations but because of its simple, direct, readable language which is nonetheless packed with the distilled essence of scholarly research. This latter point makes the book especially good as a basis of study and discussion.

God and the Nations." Edited by Paul Poling. Doubleday & Company, Inc., \$2.00

This is a study of the responsibility of religion in these perilous times, which challenges the reader to do some hard thinking and share his thought in intelligent discussion. It is included in this list because it is one of the best books in this particular field, and will admirably serve as a basis for group discussion. The

contributors are Harry R. Rudin Vera Michelas Dean, Walter W. Van Kirk, James P. Warburg and Pitirim Sorokin.

"A Call to Christian Action," by D. R. Sharpe. Harper & Bros., \$1.50

The Social Gospel is not dead! In these Rauschenbusch Lectures which D. R. Sharpe delivered at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in 1948, there is ample evidence of this fact. Here are no theological obscurities but a clear call to the Christian conscience to become active in all areas of life.

"Nicolas Berdyaev: Captive of Freedom," by Matthew Spinka. Westminster Press \$3.50

This is a fascinating account of the spiritual pilgrimage of one of the greatest modern Christian philosophers. It is a stirring apologetic for the Christian doctrine of man and of freedom written by one who by background and study is particularly fitted to interpret and evaluate Berdyaev and his supremely important witness for this age.

"The Christianity of Main Street," by T. Wedel. Macmillan Co., \$2.00

A clear description of the Christianity of the average layman and a stirring call for the preacher to make his message relevant.

Why not begin your reading in the selected field this summer—when for most of us the parish program is lightest? And if a year hence a majority of us could honestly say, "I have put the best of my disciplined mind into my ministry," who can say how far the light of our little candles might penetrate the darkness of our day.

Any of these books may be purchased at discounts from:

PILGRIM PRESS—

14 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts

19 South LaSalle Street, Chicago 3, Illinois

The Associates are eager to know how they can be of help. Write us if you want assistance in organizing a group. Some one will meet with you for such purpose if you desire. Let us know what you are doing, so that we may pass on your experiences. Tell us about the books you like best and the areas of study which your group has found especially profitable. This can be a tie binding our fellow ship more closely. And does not the Good News of Jesus Christ deserve an intelligent, prayerful, studied presentation?

Our good wishes to you in your ministry.

The Committee of Associates in Reading

Robert Armstrong, Connecticut
Arthur Bradford, Rhode Island
Fred Buschmeyer, New York
Richard P. Carter, Connecticut, *Chairman*
Chalmers Coe, Massachusetts
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